

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, IZ
SUBJ: IRAQ UN MISSION ACQUISITION OF FIREARMS

REF: (A) STATE 299104; (B) USUN 6030

1. TWO CUSTOMS AND TWO ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS AGENTS REPORTED TO THE IRAQ MISSION SATURDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 11, 1976, AS PREARRANGED, TO PICK UP THE WEAPONS AMB AL-SHAIKHLI HAD AGREED TO TURN OVER TO THEM. AL-SHAIKHLI WAS EXPECTED TO BE AT THE MISSION SINCE HE HAD ALSO PROMISED TO FURNISH THE CUSTOMS AGENTS CERTAIN INFORMATION THEY HAD REQUESTED. INSTEAD, TWO IRAQIS PULLED UP IN A DPL CAR, NEITHER OF WHOM WAS THE AMBASSADOR; THESE TWO INDIVIDUALS PROCEEDED TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF TURNING OVER THE WEAPONS WHICH THE AGENTS WERE LATER TO DISCOVER NUMBERED 70.

2. US CUSTOMS AGENT JOSEPH KING WAS ASKED TO SIGN A RECEIPT FOR "THREE BOXES," THE CONTENTS OF WHICH WERE NOT DESCRIBED. HE WAS ALSO GIVEN A COPY OF A LETTER FROM TRAFALCON, INC. SIGNED BY EDWARD S. FRIEDLAND, VICE PRESIDENT. THE LETTER WAS ADDRESSED TO THE IRAQ MISSION AND DATED NOVEMBER 17, 1976. IT REFERRED TO IRAQ MISSIONS'S PURCHASE ORDER DATED OCTOBER 31, 1976 AND STATED THAT A PARTIAL SHIPMENT HAD BEEN SENT FROM MARYLAND TO NEW YORK BY MISTAKE AND REQUESTED THE SHIPMENT BE HELD UNTIL NECESSARY PERMITS COULD BE OBTAINED FOR FURTHER SHIPMENT. AGENT KING SIGNED THE RECEIPT FOR THE THREE BOXES AND ACCEPTED THE COPY
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OF THE LETTER.

3. KING ASKED TO SEE AMB AL-SHAIKHLY AND WAS TOLD HE WAS NOT AVAILABLE. HE THEN ASKED THE NAMES OF THE TWO GENTLEMEN WITH WHOM HE WAS DEALING; THEY REFUSED TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES. KING ASKED THEM TO SIGN AN "ASSENT OF FORFEITURE" FORM, WHICH THEY ALSO REFUSED TO DO.

4. AN INVENTORY OF THE THREE BOXES WHICH CUSTOMS RECEIVED REVEALED THAT ONE BOX CONTAINED 20 WEAPONS, THE SECOND 24, AND THE THIRD 26, FOR A TOTAL OF 70 WEAPONS. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE REST OF THE SHIPMENT, IT WAS STATED THAT THERE WERE NO MORE. AN EXAMINATION OF THE BOXES REVEALED THAT THE WEAPONS HAD BEEN REMOVED THE BOXES REPACKED SINCE RECEIPT OF THE SHIPMENT ON NOVEMBER 12, 1976. THIS WAS EVIDENT SINCE SOME OF THE WEAPONS WERE WRAPPED IN COPIES OF THE NEW YORK TIMES DATED NOVEMBER 17, 1976. MARKINGS ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE BOXES OFFERED FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT THE SHIPMENT CONSISTED OF FOUR BOXES. THESE MARKINGS WERE: "1/4, 2/4, 3/4."

5. UPON LEAVING THE IRAQI MISSION, CUSTOMS AGENTS VOICED THEIR NEED FOR A FUTURE MEETING WITH AMB AL-SHAIKHLY TO OBTAIN THE INFORMATION HE HAD PROMISED THEM THE TWO IRAQIS INDICATED THEY COULD NOT SPEAK FOR THEIR AMBASSADOR.
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